

## Message Text

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47

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SY-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-10 AID-05 /069 W

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O P 121155Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9734

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BNAGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 4507

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CB

SUBJECT: MARCH 12, THE 71ST DAY OF THE OFFENSIVE

REF: PHNOM PENH 4435

1. SUMMARY. LT. GEN. SAK SUTSAKHAN REPLACED LT. GEN. SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ AS FANK CHIEF OF STAFF. THE TITLE OF COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF NO LONGER EXISTS. DC-8 AIRLIFT OPERATIONS RETURNED TO NORMAL TODAY. FIFTY-EIGHT ROCKETS AND THREE 105MM ARTILLERY ROUNDS HIT THE AIRFIELD AND VICINITY BUT NO ROUNDS CAME INTO PHNOM PENH. FANK'S EFFORTS TO CLEAR OUT THE ROCKET BELT AND RETAKE TUOL LEAP FURTHER WEST MADE LITTLE PROGRESS. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENT LON NOL BROADCAST TO THE NATION MARCH 11 THAT LT. GENERAL SAK SUTSAKHAN HAS REPLACED LT. GEN. SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ AS FANK CHIEF OF STAFF. THE MARSHAL ABOLISHED THE POST OF FANK COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. (LON NOL HIMSELF IS THE SUPREME COMMANDER.) LON NOL ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT HE HAD ASKED THE PRIME MINISTER TO CHANGE HIS CABINET AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO REPLY TO THE NEEDS OF THE SITUATION.

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3. COMMERCIAL CARRIERS RESUMED THE DC-8 RICE AND POL

AIRLIFT INTO PHNOM PENH. THEY STOPPED OPERATIONS IN MID-AFTERNOON YESTERDAY. THE NUMBER OF MORE ACCURATE AND DEADLY 105MM HOWITZER ROUNDS DROPPED TO ONLY THREE IN THE PAST 24 HOURS, BUT 58 ROCKETS EXPLODED AT VARIOUS POINTS ON THE AIRFIELD AND VICINITY. THE ROUNDS CAUSED NO REPORTED DAMAGE OR CASUALTIES.

4. FANKS OPERATION TO CLEAR OUT THE ROCKET BELT NORTH OF THE AIRPORT MADE NO PROGRESS BUT GOVERNMENT FORCES ACHIEVED LIMITED PROGRESS IN EFFORTS TO RETAKE TUOL LEAP, NORTHWEST OF THE FIELD. FANK HAS APPARENTLY NOT YET ORGANIZED ITS UNDERSTRENGTH FORCES TO DO THE JOB AGAINST A DETERMINED ENEMY. NORTH OF PHNOM PENH ALONG ROUTE 5, THE KC IS STILL HITTING THE 7TH DIVISION AREA WITH ATTACKS BY FIRE AND GROUND PROBES. ELEMENTS OF THE 7TH KILLED 25 ENEMY MARCH 11 IN THE AS YET UNSUCCESSFUL OPERATION TO RESTORE A ROAD CUT TO THE DIVISION LOGISTICS BASE.

5. LARGE CALIBER ATTACKS AT NEAK LUONG ON THE MEKONG AND MORTAR FIRE ON THE GULF OF SIAM PORT AT KAMPOT CAUSED MANY CIVILIAN CASUALTIES. BATTAMBANG LAUNCHED SMALL RELIEF COLUMNS TOWARD A POSITION SOUTH OF THE CITY THAT IS UNDER ATTACK.

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